

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIE-00 SSO-00 /016 W
-----201636Z 105015 /43
O 201555Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2928

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OEXC, OVIP, PFOR, BU (SHOPOV, VULKAN)
SUBJECT: IVP VULKAN SHOPOV

REF: SOFIA 1061

1. DCM WAS CALLED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY MAY 20 TO DISCUSS SHOPOV PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH FINANCIAL AND OTHER PARAMETERS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY WITH SHOPOV AND, WE THOUGHT, AGREED, MFA ACTING AT INSTANCE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE SET SPECIFIC CONDITIONS WHICH CAST DOUBT ON SHOPOV PARTICIPATION. CONDITIONS ARE:

A) USG TO FUND TRANSPORTATION SOFIA-US-SOFIA AND NOT ONLY TRANSATLANTIC AND INTERNAL US PORTION;

B) ALL HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ACCOMMODATIONS TO BE "DELUXE CATEGORY";

C) CAR AND DRIVER TO BE ASSIGNED SHOPOV AT ALL TIMES;

D) ALL EXPENSES TO BE PAID DIRECTLY BY STATE DEPARTMENT WITHOUT SHOPOV HANDLING MONEY AT ALL;

E) CONSIDERING SHOPOV'S MEMBERSHIP IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF BCP FULL SECURITY PROTECTION TO BE PROVIDED

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DURING ENTIRE LENGTH OF STAY IN US.

2. IN STATING THESE CONDITIONS IT SEEMED REASONABLY CLEAR THAT MFA AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE WERE MOST CONCERNED WITH PERCEIVED LEVEL OF TREATMENT OF SHOPOV (WHO, THEY EMPHASIZE, RANKS HIGHER THAN A GOVERNMENT MINISTER IN PROTOCOL-ARY TERMS) AND MOST ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANYTHING LESS THAN

FULL HONORS. DCM STATED HE WOULD OF COURSE TRANSMIT THIS INFORMATION ASAP TO WASHINGTON AND THEN, SPEAKING UNOFFICIALLY, OBSERVED THAT TREATMENT REQUESTED WOULD TAKE SHOPOV OUT OF THE CATEGORY OF "INTERNATIONAL VISITOR" AND MAKE THIS MORE NEARLY AKIN TO A "STATE VISIT". HE NOTED SENIOR PARTY OFFICIALS FROM SOVIET UNION, POLAND AND OTHER CEMA COUNTRIES HAD SEVERAL TIMES VISITED US UNDER IVP AND HAD BEEN FULLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR VISITS. MFA OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED THIS BUT STATED THAT IT WAS TRANSMITTING AN OFFICIAL REQUEST MADE IN KEEPING WITH THE KIND OF TREATMENT WHICH GOB INVARIABLY ACCORDS SENIOR VISITORS FROM ALL COUNTRIES INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL AND SECRETARY BUTZ. MFA REQUESTED REPLY NO LATER THAN MAY 25 SO THAT PLANS COULD BE MADE.

3. ALTHOUGH FULL AIR FARE COULD BE PAID, EMBASSY ASSUMES IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO MEET OTHER CONDITIONS AND INDEED PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO DO SO. IN SETTING THESE CONDITIONS, AS NOTED ABOVE, GOB CLEARLY IS TAKING SHOPOV VISIT OUT OF THE IVP CATEGORY. WE RECOMMEND EMBASSY BE INSTRUCTED TO SO INFORM GOB, ADDING THAT WE WOULD STILL LIKE TO SEE VISIT TAKE PLACE AND THAT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES PERHAPS THE BEST ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE FOR MR. SHOPOV TO VISIT THE US PRIVATELY AND AT GOB EXPENSE, WITH US SIDE PROVIDING FULL FACILITATIVE SERVICES INCLUDING PROGRAMMING AND ESCORT.

4. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION DEPT COULD PRO-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIDE US ABOUT OTHER VISITORS OF COMPARABLE RANK WHO HAVE BEEN HANDLED UNDER IVP PROGRAM GUIDELINES, PLUS PERHAPS EXAMPLES FOR THE KIND OF ALTERNATIVE VISIT THAT MIGHT BE ARRANGED, AS WE ARE ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS HERE. THE TEMPTATION, OF COURSE, IS TO TELL THE BULGARIANS WHERE THEY CAN GO, BUT WE ARE FACED HERE WITH A RATHER RIGID SOCIETY IN WHICH THEIR PROPOSALS PROBABLY SEEM REASONABLE TO THEM.

5. PLEASE REPLY NO LATER THAN 1000 GMT MAY 25. PLEASE ALSO NOTE THAT EMBASSY WILL BE CLOSED MAY 24 FOR BULGARIAN HOLIDAY AND MESSAGES INTENDED TO REACH US ON THAT DAY MUST BE SENT NIACT IMMEDIATE.
HERZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CULTURAL EXCHANGES, VISITS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SOFIA01085
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770180-0599
Format: TEL
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770535/aaaabdvx.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e7af468d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SOFIA 1061
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2434181
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IVP VULKAN SHOPOV
TAGS: OEXC, OVIP, PFOR, BU, US, (SHOPOV, VULKAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e7af468d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009